

**BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FALL RIVER, MA 02720**

**INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWING FOR THE *WRITING*
PLACEMENT TEST**

The exam is designed, written and scored by members of BCC's English Department. It asks you to read a short passage and respond to one of two topics in the form of an essay.

A successful essay will:

- be a multi-paragraph piece of writing, consisting of an introduction, supporting paragraphs and a conclusion;
- be focused on one main idea that responds directly to the topic option you have chosen
- be organized in a logical way;
- contain focused supporting paragraphs that each make a unique point that supports the main idea;
- use specifics and explanations to develop its point; and
- follow the rules of Standard Written English.

Some students have found the following tips helpful:

- You have fifty minutes to complete this essay, so **pace yourself**.
- Read the topic options **before** and after reading the passage. This will keep your reading and thinking focused on the task at hand.
- Remember to respond to only **one** topic option.
- Don't let unfamiliar vocabulary in the passage sidetrack you or shake your confidence. Make meaning of the passage by using context clues and getting a **general sense of the author's point**.
- Use the **writing process**:
 - Brainstorm
 - Plan
 - Compose
 - Revise
- Make sure that your essay is **at least four paragraphs** long.
- Make sure your essay includes an **introduction and conclusion**.
- Develop your **supporting paragraphs** (also known as body paragraphs) with specific examples, dialogue and/or details from your experience.
- Read your essay over and **make corrections**.
- Before the exam, brush up on common sentence errors like: **sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences**.
- Review **homonyms** and other **commonly misspelled words**.

Reviewing basic elements of essay writing in an English handbook might be helpful.